619 diate kin of the slayer, and eaten by representatives of the entire clan. It might, however, be insisted on that the slayer should marry a wife in
682 the name of the dead clansman and raise heirs to him. Strangers having close kinship links with a dominant clan, may refuse to pay compensation, and they tend to regard killing as a sin, since the acceptance of compensation for homicide emphasised a distinction they are anxious to obliterate.(1) A Luo tribe can be defined as a unit in which compensation for homicide is paid, or in which there is provision for payment and the settlement of the feud.

The Tero Buru

619 Luo tribes were formerly separated from each other by the *thia* - a
766 stretch of bush country left unoccupied. Between segments of the same tribe there was no *thia*. The ritual demonstration of *tero buru* took place across these boundaries. It was the custom of the Luo in the past not to bury an important man, known for his wealth or for his military ability, until the whole tribe, or a large part of it, had crossed the *thia* and demonstrated in front of the homesteads of the neighbouring tribe. The demonstration took the form of insults, challenges to fight and the tempting parade of cattle. It was a matter of honour for the challenging party to stand their ground and defend their herds with their lives. Such demonstrations were also made against neighbouring Bantu who had a similar structure to that of the Luo tribes. The demonstrating party was not usually attacked unless two *buru* parties of opposing tribes met. Sometimes, however, the opportunity was taken to try and raid the cattle of the neighbouring tribe.

619 Payment of compensation and the *tero buru* are the two main indications of tribal separation. In addition there is the association of a specific lineage unit with a tribe.

CLANS AND LINEAGES

613 Each Luo tribe has a dominant clan or lineage. The clan *(dho-ot)*,
614 has a lineage structure and lineages are differentiated by adding to the name of the clan or larger lineage *no* and the individual name of the smaller branch. Formerly, the clans were exogamous but today the larger clans are not always so. Within the large clans maximal lineages can intermarry when the distance between them has become great enough.

836 Where the separation between two lineages has not proceeded far enough or where two clans are closely related there is a socially recognised form of love-making called *codo*, which takes place between the young men and girls of both groups. Marriage is not permitted until the
582 separation has proceeded further. After some generations the less approved type of marriage *(por)* may be permitted. This is marriage by ab-
583 duction and it is eventually replaced by the ordinary form *(ocko)* when the complete separation and distinctiveness of the units is recognised.(2)

582 A man is forbidden to marry a women who is a *wat*, a cognatic relative.

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1949, No.VII, p.4.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.7.

Among the Luo a man is excluded from marrying into clans as distant as that of his maternal grandmother or into the maximal lineage of his maternal great-grandmother. Thus a Luo man may not marry his kin, but only *wasigu* (enemies) with whom no kinship is recognised. It is, therefore, difficult for a man to marry into a clan or lineage within his own tribe. The system of exogamy assists in the structural differentiation of a tribe but also it creates relations of a personal and kinship nature between individuals of two different tribes. 582

The relationship between kinship and territorial units seems to follow closely the pattern found in other Nilotic tribal groups. In the Alego tribe, for example, we are told that there is a dominant clan, the Jo Alego, and its maximal lineages, the Jo Sege and the Ka Denge. There are a number of other clans and large lineages living in the tribal territory as well as small stranger groups and individuals. The presence of these clans and lineages in Alego, and their relations with the Jo Alego, are accounted for by traditions or myths in which stranger lineages and the lineages in possession (which are personified) intermarry, and the stranger lineages assume the position of in-laws. Other tribal areas have a similar structure. Evans-Pritchard states that the relative values of lineages are the same as with the Nuer. In opposition to other maximal lineages a man will give the name of his own maximal lineage but when speaking of an opposed smaller lineage he will give his own immediate lineage, the particular branch of the maximal lineage to which it belongs.(1) 613 614

The Dominant Clan

The dominant clan is usually identified linguistically with the tribe. Thus, Alego means both the tribesmen of Alego tribal territory and the patrilineal descendants of Alego. Members of the dominant clan alone are *jopiny* or *jogweng* - the people of the land and the owners of it. The rest are *jodak* - the separated people, the strangers. Stranger lineages are grafted into the lineage structure of the dominant clan so that, through recognition of female links, the whole tribe may be regarded as a system of cognatic lineages. The Luo refer to the affiliated stranger lineages as *kaorce* - lineages of in-laws, or *kaner* - lineages of maternal uncles, since it is from them that they take their wives and the mothers of their children.(2) 619 614 613

For general purposes the *jopiny* and *jodak* are on equal terms and cooperate in matters of common interest. The differentiation only appears in matters of ritual, in marriage regulations and when homicide occurs. In recent times the differentiation has become plainer through land disputes. Formerly there was enough land for everyone and more could be obtained by war and migration. Now, there is considerable inter-lineage enmity about land. The *jopiny* claim the land in virtue of their ownership of the tribal territory and as proof of this they point to the ancestral graves. Stranger lineages which are numerous and powerful may also claim to be *jopiny* in the same area and, having dwelt there for some generations, can also point to their ancestral graves. It is the general rule that a lineage has the right to cultivate land where its forebears have lived for several genera- 614 613 508

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1949, No.VII, pp.10-11.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.14.

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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101 assimilation of these tribes were incomplete when European occupation of the country slowed down the momentum of colonization. The tribes
174 living to-day to the south of the gulf who are said to be Luo in origin and who speak Luo are Kano, Nyakac, Karacuonyo, (Mumbo, Kabondo, and Karacuonyo), Kocia, Kanyada, Gem, Kanyamwa, Karungu, Kadem, Kwabwai, Kanyadoto, Kabwoc, and Sakwa. The other locations on the sketch-map are occupied by Bantu tribes who either speak Luo only, like the Kagan (included in the map in the Kocia location) and the Mohoru; or speak Luo as well as their own language, like the
[191] Kasigunga, Kaksingiri, and Gwasi. In one instance, that of the Wanjare, who are fraternal to the Karacuonyo, a Luo tribe is said to have adopted a Bantu dialect to the loss of their own tongue because, according to the Luo myth, their ancestor killed his father in a hunting accident, and they are, on account of their Luo origin, regarded more favourably by the Luo than other Bantu-speaking tribes. The Kamagambo and Kanyamkago are said to be of Nilo-Hamitic origin, though both speak Luo to-day. Tribes which to-day speak only Luo and have Luo customs are regarded as Luo and it would be most insulting to call a member of one of them '*Jamwa*' or '*Langu*'. There is much intermarriage between Luo of pure
[582] descent and assimilated or partly assimilated Bantu. At the present day there is also some intermarriage with the Kisii Bantu, though I was told
563 that a Luo would not take one of their daughters as his chief wife. In Central Kavirondo assimilation in the areas of conquest and settlement
[191] has gone much further and, except for the Waholo, who speak both Luo and Bantu, the line of linguistic cleavage is clearer cut.

174 Luo expansion at the expense of the Bantu was like a line of shunting trucks, each tribe driving out the one in front of it to seek compensation
619 from one yet further in front, generally a Bantu tribe. Thus when the Uyoma and Asembo tribes jointly occupied what is now Uyoma territory they found there the tribes of Karacuonyo and Gem (of South Kavirondo) whom they pushed across the gulf into what was then Bantu country. Later the Uyoma people drove out the Asembo people into their present territory. These movements have led to a considerable dispersal of lineages so that lineages of the same clan are found to-day in both Central and South Kavirondo. Lineages of the same clan are found in the Gem tribe of South Kavirondo and in the tribe of the same name in Central Kavirondo, lineages of the Kanyada tribe have agnatic kinship with the Jokakan lineage of the Alego tribe, and the Luo elements in the Kowak and Kamageta tribes of Tanganyika are said to have come from Kajulu and Kadimo and to have kinsmen in those areas.

It is not surprising therefore that the late comers who pushed other Luo tribes into contact with, and conquest of, Bantu are held to have been the least influenced by Bantu culture in their speech and way of life.
[133] This reputation is enjoyed by the people of Uyoma, Seme, and Asembo. The low-lying country of these tribes, a thornwood savannah plain with patches of swamp and treeless grassland, from which Seme takes its name, suffers from seasonal drought: in all reminding one of the homelands of some of the Nilotic cousins of the Luo in the Sudan.

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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sented the senior lineage of the clan sacrificed to the sacred spear of the clan and pointed it towards the enemy before tribal war.

There were also a number of ritual experts. The most important of these, and the most important tribal figures among the Luo, seems to have been the *jabilo*, who in the language of African literature would be described as a tribal medicine-man or witchdoctor. There was one of these functionaries in each large tribal segment but one in a tribe was generally more influential than the others and a tribe requiring the services of an exceptionally famous *jabilo* might ask for them even if he lived in a distant tribe. His functions, which tended to pass from father to son, are said to have been to divine the fortunes of war, to curse the enemy, and to make magic to secure victory and the safety of the warriors. He kept his *bilo*, war magic, in horns in a granary. He did not himself accompany a raid but in return for his ritual services he received part of the spoils and according to some informants was entrusted with its division. Consequently he was a *ruoth*, man of substance. The *jabilo* was also, at least sometimes, the *jokoth* or *won koth*, the rainmaker, while at other times the rainmaker seems to have been a different person to the *jabilo*. Rainmakers among neighbouring Bantu peoples were also appealed to. It is also said that the people had to wait permission of the *jabilo* to sow and that he had ritual functions in cases of homicide within the tribe and that he was a peacemaker who could intervene in a fight by dragging his leopard skin along the ground between the two sides.

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In each tribe there is a dominant clan or lineage. The characteristics of a Luo clan are much the same as those I have described for the Nuer.

The Luo clan (*dho ot*) has a lineage structure, which means that every member of it can trace his exact genealogical relationship to every other member. Lineages (*dho udi*) are differentiated by adding to the name of a clan or of a larger lineage the copulative *ma* and the name of a smaller branch, as among the Lango, e.g. *Joseje ma Jokayila* are the Jokayila major lineage of the Joseje maximal lineage of the JoAlego clan. Collateral lineages are sometimes said to be *kanyiego*, presumably from *nyieka*, co-wife, to one another.

These larger clans associated with tribal territories are not always exogamous to-day, though they are believed to have been so in past times. It would be confusing to speak of two groups identical in their structural features by different terms because maximal lineages cannot intermarry in one and can intermarry in the other, so I use the word 'clan' for both, having stated a qualification to the accepted use of the term. Marriage is generally forbidden within the clan but it is recognized that the distance between maximal lineages may become so great, both in lineage-distance and through political and social separation, as to allow intermarriage between them. This has happened in the JoAlego clan of Alego where two main lineages, the JoSeje and the KaDenge quarrelled and now intermarry sometimes. On the other hand marriage is not permitted within such big clans as the KaNyikal of Seme, the KaRacuonyo of Karacuonyo, and

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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582 the JoOwila of Uyoma ; and is not approved, though sometimes permitted,
613 even between such fraternal clans as the dominant clans of Karacuonyo,
614 Kisumu, Kadem, Karungu, and Kabwoc. The young men are rebelling against the prohibition. Likewise I was told that though the JokOwila marry into the fraternal clan of Omia (Asembo) it is thought that such marriage may not be very fruitful.

613 Nevertheless in those big clans within which marriage is prohibited
614 or where it is not approved between fraternal clans the custom of *codo* is permitted. *Codo* is a socially recognized love-making in which the youths
836 court the girls and bring them to the *simba* or bachelor's hut and sleep
[833] with them there and have relations with them *intra crura*. Thus the Ka-Abudha and KoOkelo lineages of the JoOwila clan of Uyoma may *codo* between them, a practice said to date from two generations ago ; likewise the KaGumba and KaDepir lineages of the KaNyikal clan of Seme, though in their case it is said from the last generation only; likewise the JokOwidi and JokOgol of the KaRacuonyo of Karacuonyo. In these instances were a girl to be made pregnant her lover could not marry her.

613 When two lineages of the same clan are becoming widely separated
614 and are beginning to *codo* between them it is done at first with discre-
836 tion, because the older men are opposed to the innovation, then in open affairs in the bachelors' hut. Finally marriage is envisaged and perhaps
582 eventually permitted, in the first place the less approved form of marriage by abduction (*por*) and then the ordinary form (*meko*). When marriage begins to take place, and even more when it has the approval of the elders, it may be taken to be an indication of political fission, for it was found among the Luo, as among the Nuer, that political values are stated in the language of kinship and that the polito-territorial system is reflected in the lineage system.

582 A man may not marry a *nyakewo*, sister's daughter, in the classificatory
613 sense if her mother was a member of his maximal lineage but he can marry
614 her if her mother belonged to a collateral maximal lineage of his clan, though even then the elders do not always approve. The general principle of exogamy is that a man must not marry any woman whom he regards
184 as a *wat*, a cognatic relative, and Luo reckon kinship as widely as to exclude a man from marrying into his maternal grandmother's clan and his maternal great grandmother's maximal lineage, though it must be said that there is often disagreement, especially between men of different generations about the permissibility of marriage between distantly related persons, that is to say, about borderline cases. In spite of some divergence of opinion however it may be stated that for the Luo, people are either *wat*, kinsfolk, or *wasigu*, enemies. A man cannot marry kin and therefore must marry an 'enemy'. Hence when marriage is allowed between two groups it means that there is no kinship between them or that kinship is no longer recognized between them for purpose of exogamy and this, as said above, is an indication of political opposition, so that one often hears Luo say of a neighbouring tribe, e.g. a Karacuonyo man of the Kocia tribe, 'They are enemies, we marry them'. In other words adjacent tribes are structurally opposed segments in the tribal system

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
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while relations of a personal kind and kinship links between individuals run across their common frontiers and are compelled to do so by the exogamous rules obtaining in Luo society.

Several of the clans and maximal lineages possess sacred spears and other objects believed to have belonged to their founders. The best known sacred spear (*tong ma lisua*, spear of sacrifice) is the *tong* Alego, the spear of Alego, the founder of the JoAlego clan. In Ugenya the JokaGer clan have several such spears and there are others in possession of the lineages descended from Cuanya to the south of the gulf. Where there are important stranger lineages in a tribe they may also have their sacred objects, e.g. in Alego the KaLuo and the JokOgelo have sacred spears and the JoAgoro have a sacred stone and a sacred pot handed down from their founders. These objects are symbols of the unity of a clan or lineage and, by extension, of the tribe or tribal segment in which it is dominant, and they were used ritually in time of war or of common calamity, such as drought and invasion by locusts. They seem generally, if not always to be held by the senior line (*dho ot ma duong*) of a lineage or clan and are kept either in a granary or in hiding in the bush. The senior line is often called on by junior collateral lines to perform important sacrifices for them and the senior lineage ought to provide the sacrificial beast at ceremonies common to all the lineages. I was told also that while each lineage had its *won gweng*, 'father of the land' the *won gweng* of the senior lineage had chief prestige among them.

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Some clans and lineages have certain ritual prohibitions (*kwer*), mostly on certain foods, particularly kidneys and liver. The Luo do not give the impression of attaching much importance to them and if a man and a woman observe the same taboo it is not in itself a bar to marriage. Reference must also be made to clan and lineage honorific, or praise, names. The *nying paak* is generally derived from the name of a paternal ancestor whose name is a lineage cognomen, e.g. Okwiri (see the chart of the JoOwila clan) can be called, according to the circumstances, *wud* (son of) KoOkelo, *wud* KaJeje, and *wud* Owila. These names are much used at communal gatherings, expecially at large beer parties.

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A feature of clanship which would seem to be of some importance is the annual inter-lineage wrestling. Unfortunately, I only became aware of these shortly before I left Luoland and had afterwards no further opportunity to enquire further into the custom, or to discover whether it is practised all over Luoland or only in some tribal areas, such as U-yoma where the closely related collateral lineages wrestle for practice prior to the wrestling matches between the big lineages. Thus the Ko-Okwiri are matched against the KoObong, then these two lineages together against the KaAtuenga and KaAbudha, and so on. The lineages send a messenger to challenge the other party and when they meet an elder presides over the joint bouts and the exhibition matches between famous wrestlers on each side. The matches are said to occasion much excitement among the spectators.

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The sketch given above of the Luo clan is only an outline delineating feature of it. A little detail is filled in here and there in the following

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4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

naturally follow the low country instead of climbing a precipitous rocky ridge 2,000 feet above the plain, added to this probably the dread of the Nandi warriors was an additional reason for avoiding the highlands.

It seemed possible that some evidence of the migration might be discovered by investigations in this plain; and such was the case, for to my great surprise I found that the ruling chief of the plain Kitoto, although he wears ornaments of the Nilotic type and is married to Ja-Luo wives, is a pure-bred native of the Kisii or Kossova nation, and that a few generations back occasional bands of Kisii people trekked northwards but were stopped in the plain, and became more or less absorbed by the Nyamoga clan. In fact odd parties of Kisii people make journeys northward even to this day. The Kisii people again have legends to the effect that they originally came from the southward, and I have no doubt that as investigations are continued it will be found that the Kisii and Ware tribes are two links in the chain of evidence in favour of an important Bantu migration from Nyamwezi country northwards.

With regard to the Awa-Ware, they do not seem to have gone inland to any extent, but to have crept along by water from island to island till they ended up in the vicinity of Nyala or Port Victoria. Their dialect is closely allied to that of the Awa-Nyala.

It is a matter for regret that it is almost impossible to arrive at even the approximate dates of these migrations, but among a people without written history and legends that rarely go back more than a few generations it will readily be understood that one's data is scanty.

Class II. Nilotic Kavirondo.—The invasion of the Nilotic Ja-Luo race (Plate III) appears, as I have previously explained, to have taken place later than that of the Bantu, and they are it is believed an off-shoot of the Acholi or Shuli stock.

Their southern advance was, I feel sure, only checked by the irruption of the Elgumi people into the country to the south-west of Mount Elgon, which movement finally closed the line of outlet against all further movements from the north.

The Elgumi people will, I think, be found to be an off-shoot of the race inhabiting the country to the north of the Salisbury and Kumama Lakes, which in the fragmentary state of our information about that area may be called the Lango group, and it may turn out that these people are intermingled with a Hamitic strain from the north-east.

To revert to Kavirondo proper, the Nilotic stock in that country, although occupying as a rule a less fertile area, appears to be more vigorous than the Bantu; and the Lakoli and other Bantu tribes on their present eastern frontier all tell me that their forefathers occupied territory some fifteen miles to the west of their original location, having been gradually driven eastward by the Ja-Luo.

The Ja-Luo settlements on the southern shore of Ugowe Bay, or Kavirondo Bay as it has been renamed, are also evidences of the persistent way the Nile people have pushed southwards in search of land, and proofs are to hand that

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

765 worn is black. Others smear themselves with white earth. Relations in the village shave their heads three days after a death. The eldest son of the deceased sits on a stool in the road outside the village and his head is shaved by an old woman. For three days after the death of anyone of importance the villagers do not cultivate.

766 [726] If a big chief dies all the surrounding people collect at the village; even if a neighbouring clan is at war hostilities are suspended, and they attend the funeral rites of their late enemy. In the case of the death of a chief a new hut is built and the deceased is buried inside in a sitting posture; the grave is dug by a brother of the deceased. A new ox hide is placed at the bottom of the grave, and the head of the corpse is covered with a water pot. Seeds of every kind of grain grown are put into the grave; sweet potatoes are excluded. The people dance and drink *tembo* for ten days and many oxen are slaughtered. The men wail for ten days, but the women wail every morning for about a year. No one cultivates the fields for ten days.

844 846 *Birth customs.*—On the occasion of a birth, if it is a boy it is kept inside the house for four days, if it is a girl for three days. When a birth takes place the female neighbours attend, and a goat is killed for the mother and the other women. No man is allowed in the hut until three or four days have elapsed. The father of the child does not eat or sleep again in the hut until the child begins to cut its teeth. The mother does not go to cultivate for about nine days after the birth.

844 608 [304] [553] If a woman has had two children and they have both died, she will upon the birth of the third child take it out of the village on a basket-work tray and place it in the road; an old woman who has had a hint of this will go and pick it up and take it to her house, then the father of the child goes and buys it back for a goat; having recovered it the father bores the lobe of its right ear and inserts a small earring of brass wire. If the child is a boy it is henceforward called Owiti and if a girl it is called Awiti, meaning the child that has been thrown away. The old woman who picked up the child is afterwards called mother in addition to the real mother.

845 [553] [535] Twins are considered lucky, but the infants and their parents have to stay in seclusion in their hut for a whole month. Women neighbours may enter the hut but men may not. The twin born first is called Apio (the one who comes quickly). The twin born second is called Adongo (the one who is delayed). The birth of twins is signalised by dances which extend over a whole month; they are apparently of a somewhat obscene character.

582 583 *Marriage customs.*—Girls are espoused at the age of seven, and they often go to their husband's house at the age of ten or eleven. The suitor commences by making small payments to the father of the girl every month or two. When the man has paid say one cow and twenty sheep he takes the girl to his house.

585 The unmarried girls of the village take the bride to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat and a quantity of *mtawa* porridge to the man's village by way of providing a wedding feast. If the man's

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

village is a long way off the girl's relations sleep at his village, but if they can manage to do so they return the same day. Next day the bridegroom's brothers and his other wives take the bride back to her father's village and there is a great feast and *tembo* drink; the bridegroom does not go. 585

The father of the girl next day presents his daughter with a goat and she returns to her husband. The girl's husband then continues to make payments to his father-in-law; the total amount it is necessary to pay varies from two to six cows; if he stops paying his wife will go off to her father's village and stay there for a month or so until the man resumes payments. Before the big attack of cattle plague in 1890 and 1891 it is said that as many as forty cows were sometimes paid for a wife. 583 585

If a woman does not bear her husband a child quickly the husband stops his payments, but the husband has no claim for the return of any of the property as long as the woman stays with him. If a wife dies and has borne no children the property is returned, or one of her sisters is given the man to wife and the man only pays about twenty goats for the sister. 583 587

If a woman will not stop with her husband she is married to some one else, and the first husband is repaid from what the second husband pays. If a woman has a child and is ill-treated she can leave her husband but the child belongs to him; if the child be a boy, when it grows up and the mother grows old she will generally come back to live with her son. If after a marriage has been arranged a father is loth to part with his daughter the young man employs his friends to waylay the girl in the daytime. If the girl however refuses to stay at her suitor's village and runs away, the property paid over is returned without delay and the match is broken off. If a woman remains unmarried for a longer period than usual she often goes off to a chief or someone with plenty of cattle and states that she intends to stay there and cook for him; in such a case she is usually taken to wife, but the man pays much less than is nominally customary. Chiefs have from ten to forty wives. They are generally speaking very moral in their domestic relations. They do not intermarry in the same clan, but a man will marry the daughter of a man named the same as himself. 586 583 [622 595] [582]

Pottery.—All pottery is made by women and is similar to that of the Bantu Kavirondo, and consists of water pots, cooking pots, *tembo* pots, etc. 323

Dyes; tanning.—These people do not use dyes, neither do they tan, but they soften skins by rubbing in fat and hand-working till soft. 281 386

Arms, etc.—Their shields were formerly made of buffalo hide but are now made of cow hide; the shields are usually very large, curving round the body of the man carrying it. They also make shields of ambatch wood (called *Orindi*). They have a great fancy for spears with shafts of enormous length, ten feet or more; the heads are very small and insignificant. Use simés and clubs to a small extent; the former weapons are however I think copied from the Masai or Nandi. Also use bows and arrows; the arrows were formerly poisoned, but 411

8: Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930) 1932 FL11 Luo FL11

115 to write down the authorised version of whatever occurrence it was
184 that I wished to describe. Moreover they warned me not only that customs differed slightly from clan to clan and location to location in North and Central Kavirondo, but that the Luo who had crossed the Gulf and gone to live in South Kavirondo differed in a good many ways from the Luo who had remained on the north side of the water. It must therefore be understood that the customs which I am about to describe are those of a group of Luo clans living in a small area in Central Kavirondo, and that there may be discrepancies between my account of these customs and those of other observers in other parts of the tribal area.

II. The Marriage Customs.

●582 In the old days, before the Europeans took over the government
721 of the Luo country, it seems that a man did not normally marry until he was nearer forty than thirty, and girls did not marry until they were nineteen or twenty. In the case of a man this delay was apparently connected with his duties as a warrior. It was considered that a man fought better if he were free from the ties of married life. Though the Luo were never a fighting tribe in the grand manner like the Masai they had for some hundreds of years been pressing southwards through the surrounding Bantu tribes. Raiding for fresh land or even for cattle alone, and the consequent reprisals on the part of the raided, played an important part in tribal life, and every able-bodied man from the age of seventeen or eighteen up to the time of his marriage had to hold himself in constant readiness for a scrap. The term for a man of fighting age was *wuowe*, that for a married man *jaōt*, while that for a man who delayed to marry until much later than usual was *musomba*. After marriage a man seems to have been exempt from all warlike duties and allowed to settle down and devote himself entirely to his family life.

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582 It is likely that this postponement of marriage to a comparatively
583 late age was, apart from its connection with the defence of the tribe, an instance of the reluctance of the older men to surrender even a part of their wealth and power to their sons. A man could not marry without his father's permission, for it was only from his father (except under special circumstances into which I need not enter here) that he could obtain the cattle with which to acquire a bride, and primitive fathers are often no more anxious than some civilised ones to part with large quantities of their worldly goods for the benefit of their children. There was, however, no hard and fast convention as to the age at which a man might marry. Circumstances altered cases. A mother, for instance, who was without an unmarried daughter, and who wanted another woman to help her in the household work and cultivation, might insist that her son should bring a wife into the family, even if he had not yet reached ordinary marriageable age. Again if there

were other sons by other wives growing up in the *dala* (*dala*=homestead), a woman would hasten the marriage of her own son lest when it came to paying the bride-price for him cattle might be short on account of the claims of other sons on the family resource.

Between the permission to marry, however, and marriage itself, there intervened a long chain of events, extending over months, and sometimes even over years. The mere choice of a bride was hedged about with complications and difficulties that often delayed a man's marriage considerably. This choice was, in the first place, limited by the rule that he might not marry any woman related to him, however distantly, either on his father's or on his mother's side of the family. To do this would be to commit incest, and would bring terrible consequences upon the clans and families concerned. If it happened, as it sometimes did, that a man fell in love with a girl without knowing whether he was related to her or not, only to find that she belonged to one side or other of his own family, the discovery put an end immediately to all intercourse between them. If, on the other hand, it could be established that the two were not related, the man would get permission from his father to take her as his wife, and the usual negotiations would be put in hand. It was, however, more usual for a man to leave the choice of his wife to his father, who would select a suitable maiden with regard only to the mutual advantage of the two families concerned. In this case neither the young man nor the girl were regarded as at liberty to refuse the marriage. If the son did so, it was at the cost of his father's deep displeasure; and this was a serious matter in the old days when a man was entirely dependent upon his father, not only for the means to acquire a wife, but for his livelihood in general. So to rebel was unusual. The girl was equally at the mercy of her parents. If she disliked the husband selected for her the only way to escape the match was to run off with another man. But if she did this her lover's father would only pay a very small bride price for her, even as little as a single cow, and not only was she considered to have disgraced herself (not unnaturally in view of the severe pecuniary loss suffered by a family losing a daughter for whom the customary cattle had not been received) but her conduct was regarded as a slur on the whole family.

If a young man was specially anxious to marry a girl who was not debarred by any relationship from becoming his wife, and who returned his affection, he could establish a sole claim to her by sucking her breast before witnesses. After this ceremony she could not be given in marriage to any other man. The existence of such a custom is sufficient proof that among the Luo, as among the more civilised, marriage is often the outcome of a strong personal attraction between a man and a woman. And the fact that tribal custom provides for such a contingency within an otherwise largely utilitarian

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

783 of his village and lives in a hut with an old woman who attends to his wants, cooks for him and also feeds him, because he may not touch food with his hands. Separation lasts for three days, and on the fourth day a man who is himself a murderer, or who has at some time killed a man in battle, takes the murderer to a stream where he washes him all over. He then kills a goat and cooks the meat, takes four sticks and places a piece of meat on each stick and gives the man the meat to eat from each in turn. When the meat has been eaten, he gives him four pieces of porridge made into balls and put on the sticks. After this meal the goat-skin is cut into strips, one strip being put on the neck and one strip round each wrist of the murderer. This ceremony is performed by the two men who are alone at the river, and after it the murderer is free to return home. It is said that, until this ceremony is performed, the ghost cannot take its departure for the place of the dead, but hovers about the murderer.

428 **Inheritance.** It is usual for a son to inherit property. While a man is still in health, he makes known his wishes as to whom he desires to inherit his property, and his wishes will be observed. Should a son be too young to succeed to his father's estate at the time of death, the deceased man's brother manages the property until the son is old enough to take control. Should a man with property die intestate, the members of his clan elect one of his sons to be heir. There is no fixed law as to which son shall inherit. It is not a question of age nor may the son of a particular wife claim precedence over the sons of other wives, but the clan-members are at liberty to choose the man they consider the most suited for the office. Women never inherit or hold property. The father's stool and bracelet are given to the heir and are the insignia of lawful succession.

[562 421]

Marriage, Birth and Puberty.

● 582 **Marriage customs.** It was impossible to discover the ritual of marriage or the groups into which a man might or might not marry, all that could with certainty be learned being that there are exogamous divisions within the tribe.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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582 ●

There are no restrictions as to the number of women a man may marry nor as to the number of his wife's sisters whom he may take to wife. Previous to her marriage a young woman may have as many lovers as she wishes, she is only careful to avoid incestuous connections. The unmarried women have their own quarters in a village and the young men theirs, and they seldom have any further intercourse than that of brothers and sisters; the young men, however, from another village pay visits to the young women during the day and make love to them, and in the evening the women return the men's visit and have sexual relations with them, while other young people sing songs of an obscene character and dance outside the house. Such intercourse is not stopped nor discountenanced by the elder people, as it is a recognised custom. Should any children be born from such relations, no punishment ensues nor are the couple blamed. When a father considers his son old enough to marry, he chooses a woman to be his wife. He then takes a cow and a goat to the parents of the young woman and arranges with them the amount to be paid for the marriage-fee. If the parents consent to the match, when an instalment of the fee has been paid, the bride is conducted by her friends to the home of the young man and lives with him as his wife for ten days: during this time there is daily singing and dancing outside the house where the bride and bridegroom reside, and they take part in the dances. At the end of ten days the bridegroom's parents give a feast to all those who have gathered, and after the feast the friends of the bride escort her back to her parents, who in turn give a feast to the people that accompany their daughter. The bride remains with her parents until her husband is able to obtain and pay the full sum asked for as the marriage-fee. During this time, while the bride is waiting for her husband to bring the marriage-fee, there is no obligation upon her to live a chaste life, and she is free to have as many lovers as before. When, however, the fee has been paid and the bride claimed, she ceases to live a loose life and becomes most chaste. The husband builds his house, either in or near his father's village, and his wife is brought thither. When a man marries

[595] 836 883 [848] 584 585 [837] 591

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

husband and runs away, the amount which he has already paid on her behalf is returned and the marriage is broken off. If a woman finds herself unmarried after a long period, it is customary for her to go to a chief or a rich man and state that she has come to stay and cook for him. In such case she is usually taken to wife, but a very small complimentary present is paid for her. Chiefs may have from ten to forty wives. The Ja-luo are, generally speaking, very moral. They do not intermarry in

436. EMPTYING THE FISH-BASKETS (JA-LUO)

the same clan, but a man may marry the daughter of one who bears the same name as himself.

The Ja-luo believe in *a supreme God* whom they call "Chieng." This, however, is the same name as the sun. When a man comes out of his house in the morning, he spits towards the east, and in the evening he spits towards the west. If the sunset is extremely red, it is said to indicate the approaching death of an important person. They believe that after death the spirits of the departed go up to the sky. If a hailstorm occurs, no one goes to work in the fields on the following day. Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war. They believe that people can be killed by *witchcraft*, and that a wizard has only to show "medicine" to a person

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

allow a man's head and shoulders to enter; the roof is of grass. Outside these again is the circle of huts, strongly built of sticks and grass and with the sides plastered with a mixture of dung and mud. Each married male in the village has his own hut, and besides this a hut for each wife and two smaller huts, one for his sons and another for his daughters, which latter live with an old woman, often their grandmother. The two sexes are kept rigidly apart, and though, as will be seen, the Jaluo notion of morality is scarcely the same as the European, there is little of the promiscuity of intercourse among the Kavirondo which is so noticeable a feature among the other Nilotic tribes of British East Africa.

As the sons grow up they marry and build houses in the father's village for themselves and their wives. The eldest son usually remains with his father for good and all, but as the other sons in turn become fathers of families, they often build villages for themselves near the paternal village; as often as not, however, the sons keep together after the father's death, the eldest becoming the head of the family.

There is a strict law of exogamy among the Jaluo, though a son may marry his father's wife if she is no blood relation of his; similarly two sisters are often simultaneously the wives of one man.

Their rule of inheritance, though apparently complicated, is really simple. The husband sets aside so many of his cattle to provide food for each wife, the chief or first wife naturally having a larger share than the rest. On his death the wife and the cattle set aside for her pass to her sons, her eldest son as the new *pater familias* again getting the larger share. If a man has no sons by the first wife but sons by another, all the property, including the first wife and her daughters, pass to these sons; if a man has no sons, all his property passes to his brother or nearest male blood relation; females can own no property, being themselves but chattels. On the death of a chief his power descends upon the eldest son of his first wife, even though his second or third wife may have borne him a son before the son by the first wife was born; *i.e.*, A is his first and chief wife and E his second. A may bear him two daughters, B and C, and then a son D. Though in the meanwhile E has borne him a son F, D will become chief in virtue of his mother's priority, even though he has an elder brother (F). But if D is not of fit age to govern, F may become chief, as a regency is too advanced an institution; and similarly if both D and F are infants, some elder blood relation, such as their eldest uncle, will succeed their father. This rule not unnaturally leads to much quarrelling, as, when the dispossessed heir grows up he often lays claim to rule, with disastrous results.

A great many formalities attend a Kavirondo marriage. As has been remarked above, exogamy is the strict rule. The young man having declared his choice to his father, the latter goes off to the girl's father and arranges the dowry. He then returns, and the intending bridegroom goes over with a bull or some goats as earnest money and partakes of the preliminary feast, an essential feature of this being an offering set aside for the sun-god, consisting of a little meat, part of a

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

the herds and, by emulation of the age group next above them, slowly acquiring proficiency in the typical adult male pursuits, while the girls are drawn into the domestic tasks of the elementary family, food preparation and cooking, fetching water, and minding babies.

The young boys of a play group sleep together in the goat hut of a homestead when they no longer share their mother's hut at night. The girls sleep together in the hut of some widow of the group who is past childbearing age. This is the most important institution for the transmission of female culture. Girls only leave it at marriage, and till that time they are continuously trained in the adult roles expected of them. Boys at puberty build themselves bachelor huts (Dholuo *simba*) in which they sleep and where they also entertain their girl friends. A group of young men makes a formal assignation with a group of nubile girls from a segment of another maximal lineage into which marriage is possible, and visits and entertainments are held to and from the one lineage territory to the other. The two groups pair off with one another into sex partnerships which last till the groups break up and reform. A youth graduates out of this company of *simba* age-mates at marriage.

Authority over children rests jointly with the parents. That of the mother is likely to be the most effective in the early years, and she always holds a strong sanction in her manipulation and control of the food-supply. The father is ultimately responsible for the order of the family, and his discipline is stronger than the mother's as the children grow older. There is a relation of friendly intimacy between alternate generations. Children are on easy terms with their grandparents and will certainly use the latters' households as an escape from home discipline or as a more generous source of food if need or opportunity arises. Children are at no period encouraged to live away from home with other relatives, but parents allow them to circulate freely among a number of homesteads wherever they find the best welcome and the most plentiful food, among families which are usually both neighbours and close agnatic relatives. Brother and sister have no material reasons for conflict and there is a strong and lasting bond of affection and reliance between them, institutionalized in the symbolism of a number of ritual occasions, and linked to their important later relation to one another's children as mother's brother (*nera*) and father's sister (*waya*). Apart from parents, these are the only two consanguine relatives of the first ascending generation who are picked out by special kinship terms. The newly married woman is under the authority of her mother-in-law, and a man's relation to his wife's parents is marked by deep respect and avoidances. Ritual practices as well as personal attitudes emphasize the importance of fertility and virility,[1] and the value attached by a man to a numerous offspring and the ability of his wives to provide it. The Luo are aware of the male and female parts in procreation, but say that 'the woman's blood goes for nothing'. This seems a necessary inference from the nature of lineage organization rather than vice versa, for they would not argue that there is any tendency for children to resemble the father rather than the mother, nor do they permit marriage with close consanguine kin though of an unrelated lineage. It is

[1] e.g. the special rites which have to be carried out for a nubile girl dying unmarried, a wife dying without children, a widow dying before remarriage, a man dying when one of his wives is still childless, or a man dying before he has experienced sexual intercourse, the latter being treated similarly to a barren woman.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

said that since property has passed to the lineage of a wife it has no claim on her offspring, consequently they take their father's lineage affiliation and can always be claimed by him because they result from his semen.

The Luo conceptualization of primary kinship attitudes is in conformity with the patterns of actual behaviour briefly outlined. The relation of co-wives is visualized as one of jealous rivalry. The term for it in Dholuo is *nyiego* and co-wives refer to one another as *nyieka*.[1] From co-wives themselves this relationship tends to spread to the elementary families of which they are the female heads. Children stick up for their mother's rights over against those of a stepmother. They stand to gain all round from successful competition with the other elementary families of their homestead. This is not of great permanent importance to the daughters, but the sons have everything that is worth while to gain or lose in their rivalry with the groups of their half-brothers. Their inheritance of the most valuable and essential property—livestock and land—depends on the allocation made by their father between the elementary families. But for uterine brothers it also depends on the allocation made between them within their elementary family. Consequently uterine brothers have material reasons for competing with one another, and also for combining together to compete with all other groups of uterine brothers in their compound family, being reinforced in this solidarity by the coincidence of their mother's interests against her co-wives. These pivotal relationships within household and homestead are conceptualized by the Luo as the origin of lineage structure. It might be objected that the orientations noted here are of a kind which naturally tend to be latent in any polygynous family system. The point is, however, that such orientations not only occur in the Luo family but are expected to occur; that the pattern of residence, the kinship terminology, the general conduct of family affairs, and the usual behaviour of its members all reflect this particular alinement rather than any other of a number of alinements possible in polygynous families, and are consciously thought to do so.[2] The main features are represented diagrammatically below (see p. 21).

It is impossible, within the space of this article, to give a full account of marriage types and contracts, the system of inheritance and of succession to property and authority, exogamy, blood-feuds, ancestor worship, and the like. All these matters have a bearing on lineage organization, and I try to give here a brief general account of them, sufficient only to make clear the nature of their connexion with the other material presented.[3]

Exogamy is an attribute of the maximal lineage.[4] This study is mainly concerned

[1] *nyiego* v., to snatch suddenly, or take by surprise; *nyiego* n., the relation of co-wives, jealousy; *nyieka* n., my co-wife, my partner in jealousy.

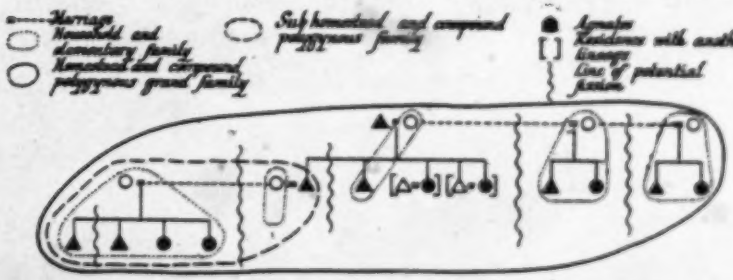
[2] In fact there are great similarities in this respect with the family structure of the Kikuyu, Kamba, and other East African peoples, but unfortunately the material on them does not tell us to what extent it is reflected in their lineage systems. Compare also Mayer, op. cit., p. 6. The most valuable comparative treatment of family structure from this angle is that of Forde, *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, cap. iii, and *The Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 195–6 note and p. 198.

[3] For further details see Paul Mboya, 'Luo Kitgi gi Timbegi' (*East African Standard*, Nairobi), an English translation of which is to be published under the auspices of the East Africa Literature Bureau. See also Evans-Pritchard, 'Marriage Customs of the Luo of Kenya', *Africa*, vol. xx, 1950, p. 132.

[4] A Luo maximal lineage, as the most inclusive agnatic descent group based on an accepted and putatively continuous genealogy, may coincide with 'clan', or it may be a segment within it where clan refers to a group united by a sentiment of common descent without this explicit genealogical basis.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

with one maximal lineage, which includes the lineage segments whose territories are marked on the map (Fig. 3) as the locations of Karachuonyo, Kasipul, Kabuoch, Kanyamwa, Karungu, and Kadem.[1] These lineages all claim patrilineal descent by a recognized genealogy from Awandu the wife of Jook, an ancestor from nine to twelve generations of ascent from elders still alive. This is an exceptionally large exogamous group and has no parallel even among the Luo, with their very wide tracing of marriage bars. Its present population is about 120,000, including a small percentage of settlers (*jodak*) from other lineages. The ban on intermarriage is still observed throughout this group except for the *jodak*. Its major segments would



probably have separated from one another completely and ceased to claim effective common descent, if it had not been for the tendency of European administration to crystallize the relations of maximal lineages at about the stage they had reached when outside control was first imposed over half a century ago. Since that time the population of the group has probably doubled to reach its present size. It is regarded by all the Luo as one of the most important and most authentically Luo groups among them. Since, as the map shows, the territories of its major segments are not contiguous, but form three separate blocks, their day-to-day activities have become similarly divided; I deal chiefly with the block formed by the locations of Karachuonyo and Kasipul, which have a population of 90,000. The lineages of both these locations claim agnatic descent from Rachuonyo, and will be referred to together as Karachuonyo. (They were, in fact, called East and West Karachuonyo by the British administration until recently.) Karachuonyo people can intermarry with the lineages of the surrounding locations—Nyakach, Gem, Kanyada, and Kagan (see map, Fig. 3)—as well as with the groups of *jodak* who have been permitted by them to settle within their territory.[2]

Cases of murder between Karachuonyo and other lineages would—before the British administration—have occasioned blood-feuds between them in which the

[1] Wanjare is also included, but these people separated from the Luo and were incorporated into the Banta Kisii.

[2] There are only three considerable groups in Karachuonyo which are not agnatic descendants of Rachuonyo: Kanyadhiang' (1157), Wagwe (1734), and Kanwala (400); see Fig. 1. Tradition accounts for them as descended either from wanderers who became dependants of Karachuonyo families or from orphan castaways discovered and reared by them. In either case they married Karachuonyo girls, as is almost inevitable in a system of localized exogamous lineages. They therefore rank as sister's son's lineages to Karachuonyo.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

613 lineage of the murdered man endeavoured to kill a member of the murderer's lineage
628 in revenge. But the family of the murderer could forestall this process by offering a girl or twelve head of cattle in compensation. If wilful murder occurs between segments within the same maximal lineage, fighting may again occur and a member of the murderer's segment be killed in revenge. Here it is impossible for a girl of the group to be offered in compensation since she would be of the same maximal lineage and exogamous group as the murdered man, and could not be married by any kinsman of his. But the senior elder recognized by both segments calls a council representative of both, and the murderer, if judged guilty, is supposed to be exiled.
613 When a man kills a close relative, belonging to his own minimal class A segment
673 of the maximal lineage, it is *nuru*—a ritual offence.[1] The murderer must bury his
682 relative and stay by the grave until *chulo* (the first mourning period) is finished. He
688 must cohabit with the dead man's wife, if she has borne no children to her husband, so that she may bear a child to be named after the dead and to guard his homestead.[2]

613 The level of groups between which marriage can take place thus corresponds to
582 the level at which general relations cease to be those prescribed between kinsmen, and the groups with which marriage is possible tend to be those between which
584 hostility is the usual attitude. The Luo recognize this correlation, and regard *ode* (in-laws) and *nanga* (enemies) as almost interchangeable terms.

585 The normal form of marriage is negotiated by go-betweens on behalf of bride and bridegroom with their respective families. A transfer of cattle has to be made to the bride's family, the normal number being twelve. When the two families are agreed as to the suitability of the match, the groom arranges for a party of his friends to drag the bride from her home. The bride is expected to make a show of resistance and weeping, but it is significant that the dragging must not take place when the bride's parents are absent from the homestead. After the bride is thus brought to the *simbo* of the groom, the latter deflowers her in the presence of married men and women witnesses; the tokens of her virginity are placed on potsherds and paraded in triumph to the bride's home the next day and a feast is held there. If the bride fails to prove her virginity in this way no feast is held, and one head of cattle less is paid to her family. The real commencement of a marriage is said to be the groom's sending of *ruok kode* (the 'heifer of the stick'), which goes to the bride's mother, and a bull to her father. Then comes the main payment, varying according to the wealth of the two parties and to the general level of Luo wealth in cattle at the time, but usually eight upwards. After this bride and groom live together for some time in the latter's *simbo*, and then the bride gets permission to return to her own home.
[583] The groom goes there with a heifer and a bull, and the feast of *Ariewo* is held. This completes the statutory twelve cattle of the bridewealth. Bride and groom then return

[1] Some statistics of actual cases would be required to discover how far the level of segment within which murder is viewed in this way coincides with that within which widows of kinsmen may be inherited and sentiments given in marriage prevention. My stay was too short for the collection of such statistics, but my impression was that such a coincidence is very vague, and it is certainly not consciously present in the minds of the Luo.

[2] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer*, pp. 3–10. Despite its importance among the Nuer, the obligation of ghost marriage is far from universal among Nilotic peoples. Among the Luo-speaking group it is not practised by the Kenya Luo nor by the Alur and, probably, the Acholi.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

less as titular owner of the whole herd. The scheme of division may be represented as in the diagram below. All other livestock is divided in the same way. The eldest son of the first wife must marry before any other sons can do so, and if the first wife has no sons the rest must wait till there is no further chance of her bearing any. When the first wife dies, the second wife becomes chief wife of the homestead, but a first wife's full status can only be succeeded to when she is replaced by a sister and a new homestead is built. The property of a barren wife is inherited by a stepson who is adopted into her household to do the man's work in it.

CATTLE HERD

All herded together

Head of homestead titular owner of all

1. *Cattle of the whole*
Strict property of homestead head.

Used to help sons or brothers' sons to marry, or to marry new wives for homestead head.

Ultimately inherited by the youngest son of the homestead, who also takes the father's share of cattle from any subsequent marriages of sisters.

All derived from the heifer and bull taken by the father at every daughter's marriage, and from their increase.

Milk from these used by the homestead head.

Cattle of the wives' houses
Most to milkpot, some to sparkers, rest among two wives.

2. Cattle strictly property of the wives.

Ultimately inherited by youngest son of each house.

All derived from the heifer called *rusk kode* received by the mother at each daughter's marriage, and from the heifer of *simbo* and bull settled upon a wife by her father at the end of her marriage ceremonies.

Milk from these used by the wives.

3. Cattle held for sons' marriages.

Any residue inherited by youngest son of each house.

All derived from the cattle received at daughters' marriages other than those specified under 1 and 2.

Homestead head has over all discretion in the original division of incoming cattle, and can persuade wives to give up cattle from category 3 to help empower to marry, and may by agreement take an extra heifer from those received at a daughter's marriage, to complete the bridewealth of one of his other wives.

Succession to authority in the family, and also in the lineage, depends on a combination of three qualifications: primogeniture, personal suitability in character and wealth, and appointment by one's predecessor. Primogeniture is highly regarded and preferred, but is never an absolute rule. Whenever an eldest son is unsuitable, or another agnatic relative is clearly more suitable, the latter is chosen to succeed. But a successor must be named by his predecessor, and as a result of the strong common sentiments in family and lineage segments, the predecessor's appointee seems usually to have been the one whom the elders of the group wish to elect when they meet at the funeral of the predecessor to confirm his choice.

Ancestor worship is falling into abeyance among the Luo of today. All those who go to school become at least nominal Christians, and this affects most of the young, while the old are becoming diffident in the performance of rites which no longer command universal respect. The spirit shrines which used to be placed between the first and second wives' huts are hardly seen today, nor the three stones which used to stand before the spirit shrine, with the stone of sacrifice buried beneath (see

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

this number, 90 were male suicides and 130 female. I have selected for the purpose of this chapter 10 male cases and 13 female cases as typical, and these were investigated in more detail to provide examples. Considerable time was spent among the villagers in each case, and full discussions were held with the elders in an attempt to determine the motive and the events which led up to the suicide. For obvious reasons, I shall not use correct names when describing these cases.

MALE SUICIDES.

Male suicides in Luo usually follow loss of status. Seven of the ten cases can be so classified. The first five are of the type which involved intense emotional feelings of shame, loss of honor and status within the framework of the indigenous culture. Following these are two case histories of suicides which involved loss of status in the acquired or modern sense. Two cases will be described which involved the loss of status through poverty and the loss of traditional respect of sons, and finally one case which resulted from social ostracism.

The first suicide concerned a man whose younger brother married before he did. In Joluo society, men of the extended family marry in strict order of status, that is, the senior son of the senior wife must marry first. It may happen that he is younger in chronological age than, perhaps, a son of a more junior wife, but even in this circumstance, the younger son in years, who is senior in status, is technically married before his brother—that is, the payment of the first animals for a young girl allow the senior son to marry.

Suicide Case No. 1.

A young man who was the senior son of a senior wife was chronologically the oldest of all the sons in the village. His father and mother were both dead and, although he would eventually become head of the homestead, until he married he

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

raised against such raiders. It is considered a disgrace to be discovered as an accomplice in raids on the girls' sleeping quarters.

On attaining Maturity

The attainment of maturity among girls is marked by the first onset of menstruation. In the past this was kept very secret until several periods had been experienced, and even now its first occurrence is kept secret. Formerly, early preparations were made for it by instructing the girls about the physical changes involved.

The information regarding this important physiological happening used to be given by the old woman in whose hut the girls slept. At present the information is obtained largely from experienced women with whom the girls associate. In the past there was no initiation ceremony to celebrate the event, and today the position remains the same. Although the betrothal of a girl could take place as early as ten, the social attitude was and still is that girls should not be handed over to their husbands before attaining maturity. Even when the mutual handing over took place before this age, the girl was obliged to live in the home of some older woman until the advent of menstruation. It is still believed that premature marriage results in great weakness to the girl.

The social position of a girl on reaching maturity. The social position of the newly-mature girl is vague and uncertain. Any abnormality of mind, character or body, is a source of anxiety to her family. Moreover, as most girls marry between sixteen and eighteen, there is a tendency for ill-wishers to over-state the ages of girls above that limit, because the attitude of society towards them is similar to that adopted towards overdue goods. Those who fail to marry at an early age thus become subjects of scorn. So strong is the pressure exerted by

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

source of much social rejoicing to discover that a married woman had been found to be a virgin. Such a bride was given a high prestige among the other women.

In the past, if a woman gave birth to an illegitimate child, her only chance of marriage was to an old man with a number of wives. There was no possibility of occupying the position of chief wife of the family; and the heads of cattle paid were much fewer. The child was taken by the man who legally married her, but she was not allowed to give birth in her own home. Everything was done to get rid of her as soon as possible.

Examples of such pregnancies are very common at present. But although social disapproval is still keenly felt, modern conditions have become more favourable to women in this situation, and an increasing number of them are being married to bachelors. Unlike some communities, no death punishment was ever given. If the occurrence takes place between close relatives the matter is kept secret; in the past, however, the couple could be exiled.

Modern Education and Adolescent Girls

Progress in the education of adolescent girls is hampered because the Luo people do not appreciate its suitability to the environment of their women. To the majority, modern education is associated with clerical work and the many other jobs that men take up after a school career. The position of girls in this scheme is not clearly envisaged.

The social importance attached to marriage is having to adapt itself to a prolonged school career and the raised age for marriage which this implies. An inability to appreciate schooling for girls is also based on a high esteem for the traditional education which it tends to interrupt and weaken.

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BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Preliminary Considerations

One difference between the older traditional kind of marriage and marriage as it is conducted nowadays lies in the part played by relatives to make the venture a success. Individual initiative was formerly negligible, the greater part of the marriage negotiations being undertaken by the relatives of both parties. This had the effect of reducing the importance of the bridegroom whose initiative gave way to a dependence upon the good will of his relations to whom the task of negotiation was left.

At present the tendency in marriage is towards individualism, although it is still a matter where society plays a considerable part. But since the individual man and woman are taking a greater part in deciding whom they shall marry, there is now a greater opportunity to develop an attachment genuinely based upon love. Steps are still usually taken, however, to ensure that the man's family has sufficient wealth to pay a satisfactory dowry, and the co-operation of the society in which the girl lives is needed if the relationship is to be successfully established. Great care is also taken to see that the marriage of the couple would not go against the normal stratification of relationships already in existence.

The marriage of a member of A-B family to C-D family* excludes the children of G and H from intermarrying with any member of the lineage of the maternal grandparents. So long as connection with the

*See diagram on p. 44.

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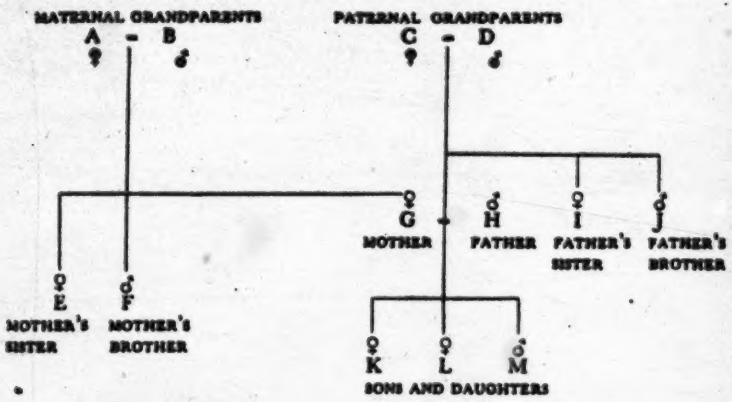

maternal grandparents can be traced, descendants of G-H family will not marry the person concerned.

But E may be married to H's brother and *I* too may marry E's brother. Should F's son wish to marry from the community in which G has been married it would be G who would take the responsibility of looking for a young woman from among the daughters of her brothers-in-law and not from among her sisters-in-law. In the same way, the sons of G's brothers-in-law cannot marry any of G's sisters or sisters by relation (daughters of her uncles). The method of acting through a relative in establishing a marriage connection is still in use, although personal initiative is increasingly taking its place.

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The Position of a Betrothed Woman

The life of a betrothed woman presents a busy time of conflicting and disturbing news. Information of much discomfort to both parties comes and goes and is forgotten. To the girl such information is of great importance, and her attitude is often affected by it. Each time a

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Although a larger number of males would normally be preferred, a family of exclusively male children is regarded as a disadvantage because of the economic burden incurred when the sons want to marry. But when a father has only female children, his position is considered as 'dead', for a family is only considered as living when there are male members to perpetuate the line.

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The Social Environment

Lineage. Social relationship among the Luo is determined by the strict manner in which their society is organized. Since the social structure follows a system of lineage (*dhoudi*, pl., *dhoot*, sing.), the exogamous limits or the limits within which intermarriage may not take place, depend on the relationship between these lineages. When relationships are close, the lineages unite through their dead originators until a common ancestor is reached. The lineages continue to grow, thus stretching the distance of relationship further and further. The breaking of the rule against intermarriage depends on the attitude of the living members of the lineages and the distance between them and their ancestors.

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In addition to the regulation of matrimonial relationships, the structure of the society also determines ritual observances and funeral ceremonies among the Luo, while the relationship between the different lineages is characterized by competition, which is often a feature of polygamous homes.

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Family relationships. The difference between monogamous and polygamous homes is found not only in the status of the women, but also in the psychological attitude towards the parents resulting from the husband and wife relationship. Although it is generally assumed that the focus of family life is the father, the degree of

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